

Amendments to the Drawings

Please replace Fig. 2 with the attached new Fig. 2.

Remarks/Arguments

The Final Office Action mailed July 28, 2004 has been received and carefully reviewed. Claim 1 - 7 are currently pending in the application.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1 and 3 - 7 as being anticipated by Meirsmann et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,636,923, hereinafter "Meirsmann"). The Examiner also rejects Claim 2 as being unpatentable over Meirsmann as applied to Claim 1 and view of standard USB implementation further evidenced by Russell (U.S. Patent No. 6,584,519, hereinafter "Russell"). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Abstract has been amended to reflect claim 1 as amended. The specification has been amended to account for colloquial translations and to fill in appropriate units of measure. Figure 2 has been replaced to account for missing or unclear connecting lines and, therefore, bring Figure 2 into concert with the text of the specification. It is believed no new matter has been added.

The following remarks are made to address the rejections and further the prosecution of this application as a Request for Continuing Examination (RCE). Claims 1 and 3 have been amended.

As amended Claim 1 recites:

An apparatus for receiving an audiovisual program comprising a circuit for communication with means of connection to a bidirectional communication network, wherein the apparatus comprises:

- a first connector for communication with a master apparatus, said first connector comprising an electrical coupling for the reception of a supply voltage from the master apparatus;
- at least one second connector for communication with a peripheral apparatus;
- a switching circuit comprising at least a pin connected to at least an input/output pin of a controller, at least a pin connected to the first connector and at least a pin connected to the second connector, such that either the first connector is linked to the controller or the second connector is linked to the controller;
- means for detecting a presence of the supply voltage on the first connector, the means for detecting for switching the apparatus to a master mode of operation in relation to the peripheral apparatus in the case of the absence of the voltage, and to a slave mode of operation in relation to the master apparatus when the supply voltage is present, wherein the means for detecting the presence of the supply voltage controls the switching circuit for permitting communication either between the apparatus and the peripheral apparatus connected via the second connector in the case of an absence of the supply

voltage or between the apparatus and the master apparatus when said supply voltage is present.

The present invention is directed to an apparatus that includes a switching circuit for changing or altering the operating mode of the apparatus from a master mode to a slave mode or vice versa, in response to the presence of a supply voltage. Specifically, Claim 1 recites a switching circuit and a means for detecting a presence of the supply voltage, wherein the means for detecting the presence of the supply voltage controls the state of the apparatus and the switching circuit.

Meirsman describes a hub station that includes host processor 24 coupled to hub circuit 22 for allowing the hub station to be part of more than one independent USB-like communication system at the same time. When a host station is connected to host connector 26, the apparatus is capable of functioning as a pair of hub stations, one hub station connecting the local host processor 24 to respective slave connectors 28a - c, and the host station to its respective slave connectors 28a-c.

The Examiner specifically points to "In a USB system this is realized because the new station pulls up a potential on a pin of the USB connector" at col. 4, lines 9 - 11. In contrast, as recited in Claim 1 as amended " means for detecting the presence of the supply voltage (VBUS) on the first connector..." . It is clear that the supply voltage is provided by the connected apparatus, not the apparatus itself. The potential can also be pulled up by the presence of an electrical element linking two pins, the potential being provided by the apparatus itself. This is often used in the USB standard, for example, by a USB key that does not contain any power supply. The Examiner interprets a posteriori the teachings of the present invention when in fact, there are many other means for pulling up a potential than providing a power supply. It is, therefore, respectfully submitted that the "means for detecting a presence of the supply voltage" is not taught or suggested by Meirsman.

Further, the Examiner relies on "In case no host station is connected to the host connector 26, the local host processor 24 operates as host processor communicating with slave stations connected to slave connectors 28a-c." for the proposition that Meirsman discloses a switching means. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner. The above statement discloses that the state of the apparatus switches from a first state to another state, but does not teach a "switching means" controlling the

communication between several pieces or units of apparatus. In contrast, as recited in Claim 1 as amended

the switching circuit comprising at least a pin connected to at least an input/output pin of a controller, at least a pin connected to the first connector and at least a pin connected to the second connector, so that either the first connector is linked to the controller, or the second connector is linked to the controller

Further, according to Meirsman, any slave apparatus 11, 13, 15 and 16 can always communicate with the hub circuit 22. It is never taught in Meirsman that one of them can disconnect the communication of another apparatus. In contrast, in the present invention, the presence of the supply voltage (provided by a device linked via the first connector) triggers the commutation of the switching means and cuts any communication between the apparatus and the device connected with the second connector. Meirsman describes "The host station 10 or hub station 12, 14 to which the new station is connected senses the interaction of the new station. In a USB system this is realized because the new station pulls up a potential on a pin of the USB connector" at col. 4, lines 7 - 11. Therefore, the hub circuit 22 of Meirsman must continually scan all connectors 28a, 28b, 28c in order to determine if an apparatus is connected or not. In contrast, however, as taught in the present invention, this situation is impossible because the connection of a device linked with the first connector cuts any communication with a device connected via the second connector. It is, therefore, respectfully submitted that the switching means recited in Claim 1 as amended is not disclosed or taught by Meirsman.

Regarding claim 2, Applicants respectfully submit that Russell fails to cure the defects of Meirsman regarding independent claim 1 as amended. It is, therefore, respectfully submitted that claim 2, which depends from claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the combination of Meirsman and Russell for at least the reasons discussed above as well as the additional features recited in claim 2.

In light of the above remarks, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 is not anticipated and is patentable over the art of record. Claims 3 - 7 depend directly or indirectly from independent Claim 1. It is, therefore, respectfully submitted that Claims 3 - 7 are also not anticipated and are patentable over the art of record for at least these reasons as well as additional features contained therein.

Having fully addressed the Examiner's rejections it is believed that, in view of the preceding amendments and remarks, this application stands in condition for allowance. Accordingly then, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully solicited. If, however, the Examiner is of the opinion that such action cannot be taken, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicant's attorney at (609) 734-6440, so that a mutually convenient date and time for a telephonic interview may be scheduled.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this amendment is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on:

10/1/04
Date

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